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F750909-1128

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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12-D
Action

Control: 16084
Rec'd: October 27, 1957
7:09 a.m.

AKA
Info
RMR

FROM: Guatemala City
CORRECTED PART ONE

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 166, October 26, 6 p.m.

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DEPTEL 226

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As stated EMBTEL 163 we are concerned at prospect PR participating in new elections. Problem is not so much Communists have increased in numbers or effectiveness but they have already infiltrated and might be able eventually control or substantially influence PR just as they did political parties supporting Arbenz regime. There are many sincere liberal elements in PR who are opposed to communism but there are also many others who have demonstrated past tolerance for communism.

Junta says no (repeat no) candidate will receive official favors in elections. If this is case it will mean decisive moral vote will go to candidate who has best organization. PR is likely be more effective in this regard.

Ydigoras are debilitated financially and physically by recent campaign and psychologically it will be difficult keep enthusiasm high in new campaign. Substantial part of Ydigorista vote was cast more in opposition to MDN than in favor of Ydigoras. Source of Ydigoras strength derived from his personification of Caudillo type leadership but more especially from his vigorous opposition to government machine. He had substantial following among all classes particularly propertied ones. We have unconfirmed reports Ydigoras received support from Guatemalan exiles.

MDN had no (repeat no) real body of adherents who were dedicated to its philosophy or leadership. Like Ydigorista Party MDN [illegible] around a personality, Castillo Arma[illegible]

by [illegible] Bot

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-2- 166, October 26, 10 p.m. from Guatemala City

It got majority of votes in last elections only because it had government machinery behind it. It is now discredited and has probably little political strength.

Junta and other military officers are reported hopeful Congress will choose Enrique Peralta Azlakia as first designate to succeed Flores Avendano as interim president. Peralta was actively opposed to Castillo Armas and is highly regarded by many PR members. It is conceivable as interim president Peralta might favor PR during electoral period.

If, as seems likely, PR should be legalized many people believe PR might have good possibility winning next elections, especially if given time to organize.

It is difficult see how new candidate might pick up support from best elements in both PR and MDN. PR and MDN are not politically compatible. Next electoral race will probably be principally among Ydigoristas, PR and Christian Democrats. It would be difficult for Cruz Salazar or others to build up substantial following if elections are held about December 1.

SPARKS

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(#) Omission. Correction to follow.
NOTE: Advance copy to Mr. King (MID) 9:15 a.m., 10/27/CWO-FED

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